

## GRANTEE MONITORING

Grantee Name	Chisago Life Care d.b.a. Options for Women/Chisago
Location/Address	6344 Elm Street, North Branch, MN 55056
Date and Location of Site Visit	May 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2017 – Options for Women/Chisago
Grantee Participants	Betty Mitchell, Kori Schmidt, Annette Christensen
MDH Participant(s)	Mary Ottman
Grant Agreement #/PO #	

### **PURPOSE:**

In accordance with the MDH Policy 238.01 Grantee Monitoring, MDH will conduct at least one monitoring visit per grant period on all state grants of over \$50,000, and at least annual monitoring visits on grants of over \$250,000.

The purpose of the grant monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress against the grants' goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period and to build rapport between the state agency and the grantees. This visit may cover topics such as statutory compliance; challenges faced by the grantee, modifications made to the grant program, program outcomes, grantee policies and procedures, grantee governance, and training and technical assistance needs.

The findings or information obtained through this monitoring activity will be used:

- To ascertain how MDH program funds are being utilized
- To provide targeted technical assistance needs
- To improve program implementation performance
- To suggest other training needs
- In future funding decisions

### **OVERVIEW**

1. Is the Grantee's non-profit 501(c) 3 status current? [Yes](#)

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2. Does the Grantee have a central file containing the official records for this grant agreement and/or amendment? [Yes](#)
3. Where is this central file located? [Betty Mitchell's office, Executive Director](#)
4. Who is responsible for this central file? [Grant staff](#)
5. Does the central file include
  - The grant proposal? [Yes](#)
  - The award letter? [Yes](#)
  - The signed grant agreement and any/all amendments? [Yes](#)
  - Any/all requests and/or approvals for scope/budget changes? [Yes](#)
  - The work plan? [Yes](#)
  - Any/all payment requests (invoices)? [Yes](#)
  - Any/all signed subcontracts? Not applicable (no subcontracts) [Yes](#)
  - Any/all Progress Reports? [Yes](#)

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Does the organization meet all reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement and/or amendment? [Yes](#)
2. Are expenditure reports submitted timely and accurately? [Yes](#)
3. Are progress reports submitted with all required information and in a timely manner? [Yes](#)

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### CONTRACTUAL

1. Does the Grantee have written policies or procedures addressing use of contractors and/or subcontractors? [Yes](#)
2. Were any sub-contractors paid from the MDH grant required to sign a contractual agreement outlining services to be rendered, duration of engagement, and pay rate? [Yes](#)
3. Was the contractual agreement(s) reviewed and approved by MDH before implementation? [Yes](#)

### PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF THE GRANTEE

1. Are time distribution records (e.g., time-sheets) maintained to show how employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind to, the MDH grant and who work on multiple projects/programs spend their time? [Yes](#)
2. Do personnel and/or payroll records show dates of hire/termination, immigration status if applicable, actual hours of time worked, leave time, federal and state programs worked on, and earning for all employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind, to the MDH grant? [Yes](#)
3. Does the Grantee have policies and procedures in writing regarding: [Currently most policies are not officially noted](#)
  - Payroll?
  - Travel?
  - Overtime?
  - Timesheets?
  - Taxes?
  - Purchasing?

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- Compensated time off?

4. Are employees time sheets approved? [Yes](#)

By whom (what position)? [Supervisor and/or Director](#)

By the Director? [Yes](#)

5. Does the Grantee's payroll preparation and distribution involve more than one employee? [Yes, staff, Executive Director and Board President](#)

6. Does an authorized official approve all checks before being signed? [Yes Executive Director and Board President](#)

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### PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Please use this space to answer all questions.

#### ***Program History***

- When was your program started? **33 years ago in Lindstrom.** Why was it started? **To help those experiencing an unplanned pregnancy make informed decisions regarding their pregnancy.**
- What need does your program fulfill? **Free pregnancy testing, options counseling and non-judgmental support. Referrals for resources based on clients stated need. Mentoring and support to make positive life choices for both the client and their families in regard to health, wellness and healthy parent-child relationships.**
- How has the program grown or changed since its beginning? **We have grown from a single service, offering free pregnancy tests with lay counseling, to a multi-service center. We started offering Earn While You Learn parenting education classes a few years ago. Thanks to the grant funding we are now also offering a FitMoM program, Practical Fatherhood Program and an Intentional Living Program. Our Job Search and Readiness Program has been expanded. Our new Baby Café Program will launch this summer.**

#### ***Grantee's Target population***

- Who does the organization primarily serve? **Women with young children**
- What is the program's demographic and geographic coverage? **Our demographic is primarily Caucasian and a small percentage is other nationalities. Chisago County and surrounding areas.**
- Review recent Demographic reporting. **Recent Demographics was discussed. Winter months had sparse clientele. Outreach efforts are hoped to bring spring demographics and client numbers up.**

#### ***Leadership and Governance***

- Effective Board: How many board members currently serve, who are they? **6 - Ann Olson, Jackie Scheldorf, Leah Lackas, Dan Gnau & Angie Gnau.**
- How often do they meet? How are they informed of organization's progress and challenges? **Once a month with additional event specific meetings as needed.**
- How supportive is the Board of the program? **Totally supportive.**
- How is the program staffed? **We have 3 staff members which includes a Director of Client Services, a Director of Operations and Outreach and a Client Services Assistant. Who is**

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responsible for the supervision of grant staff? Director of Client Services and Director of Operations.

- How are staff evaluated on their performance? How long have PA staff been employed there? Staff are reviewed by their supervisors. Cindy Hagen was hired in August 2016, Kori Schmidt was a volunteer for 1 year prior to being hired on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Betty Mitchell has been a volunteer for 6 years and has been fulfilling Director duties since grant inception.
- How are staff background checks done? Currently background checks are not completed for staff or volunteers working with clients or funding.
- What is your organization's policy on complaints for staff and clients? Complaints are brought to a Director and the Board of Directors. A non-involved party will contact the client. No current policy in place for this issue.

### **Budget**

- Does the current budget reflect your work plan activities? Yes, but a budget review will be initiated by staff for the remainder of Year 1 and for Year 2 of the grant.
- Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope? Yes
- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing? No
- Has your Financial Reconciliation taken place? No, but the Reconciliation was discussed as to what to expect.
- If you have an elevated risk designation, and/ or your Financial Reconciliation report cited any concerns, these will be discussed. Chisago Life Care has a medium risk designation and this was discussed with staff.

### **Review Work Plan including:**

#### **Partners**

- If applicable: how are people referred to the program? Are there any barriers encountered with referral sources? What is your most common referral source? Friends, Website, Chisago County Human Services.
- Challenges with partners or specific counties? No

#### **Work Plan**

- Review your 2016 – 19 grant application's description of the program you are asking to be funded. On your work plan note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.

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- **Prepare a short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served.** How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing? Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed? *Based on our application we have added the FitMoM program which currently includes a weekly exercise class for clients and their children. We are now offering a Practical Fatherhood Program and an Intentional Living/Goal Coaching Program. We now have computer work stations for our Job Search and Readiness participants as well.* Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased since June 2016? *Decreased 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter – winter weather may explain this decline.*
- Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status?
- Do you anticipate making any changes to the 2017-18 Work Plan? If so, in what way and for what reasons? *We overestimated the number of clients that would be served and would like to decrease our work plan numbers in several areas if allowed. It was suggested by the grant manager that staff review the Year 2 Work Plan for more accurate report count numbers.*

### Participants:

- What type of outreach does the organization put into action? *We have been speaking at area churches and civic organizations to share our programing. We cross refer with the Chisago County Public Health Department and local non-profits such as The Refuge Network and Family Pathways. What is working well? We tend to seek out specific partners based on client need. The community connections we have made are impressed with the work we do and the programs we offer.*
- What are the more the challenging aspects to finding or retaining clients? *We do not see a lot of clients needing pregnancy testing. We would like to increase traffic in this area.*

### Data:

- How is program data collected and by whom? *Data is collected by the Director of Client Services on an excel spreadsheet.*
- Is data collected useful to agency? *We were collecting this data through our Ekyros computer program. Having to separate clients based on the age of their children and/or pregnancy status is requiring additional tracking measures.*

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- Anything we can do to help or simplify data collection?

### **Review Evaluation**

- Your 2015-16 Evaluation Report Summary will be discussed (If you were a past grantee). [N/A](#)
- Your 2016-17 Evaluation Plan will be reviewed. Any suggestions provided in your 2015-16 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing a similar evaluation. If you are planning a new evaluation, details will be discussed. Do you have any questions on your evaluation? [Year 1 Evaluation Plans were discussed. This year's evaluation project will center on looking at increased physical activity and balanced meals as indicators for program evaluation. The outline of this year's project and next year's plan were discussed.](#)

### **Miscellaneous**

- Anything else you would like to share? [Chisago Life Care owns their building that houses their programs. They are in the process of fixing up the exterior and interior of the building to make it more inviting and workable for their programs and clients.](#)
- Anything else we haven't asked?

### **What can we do to help?**

- Trainings and Grantee meetings useful for grantee? Any topic suggestions? [The 2017 Spring Grantee meeting was much appreciated.](#)
- Feedback or suggestions for the state?
- Is there any way MDH can assist you to better equip your success in the Positive Alternatives Grant Program?

### **Summary:**

[Chisago County Life Care is a new grantee for the 2016-2019 Positive Alternatives \(PA\) grant program. The organization began the first year of the grant cycle with major staff changes. They did hire a new Executive Director this fall and have begun their work as a PA grantee. To begin they have strived diligently to provide more order to their financial records and for their financial management of the new grant. Work has also been accomplished in establishing their additional funded PA programming along with the expansion of current programs. Outreach has been a high priority for the staff in getting the word out to all local agencies and churches as their site in Chisago is fairly new. Discussions included the inclusion of background checks for all staff and volunteers, the addition of written personal policies and procedures, and the review and updating of their work plan and budget for Year 2 of the grant. The staff are also encouraging the board to add new board members, attend TLC board trainings and initiate possible term limits for all board members.](#)

[Currently Chisago County Life Care has PA funding for the following programming: case management, crib distribution and safe sleep education, employment and education assistance, fatherhood program, life skills education, material support, mental health, mentoring program, parenting education and pregnancy](#)



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testing. The FitMom program has been going well and will soon include a nutrition component for all clients. A new Baby Café Program will be started this summer in cooperation with local Public Health nurses as a group meeting for both education and support for young moms. The fatherhood program is not making much progress.

With the organization making good progress in staffing all PA positions, organizing their financials, and supporting their efforts with good community outreach it is hopeful that they will make good progress in their efforts toward reaching their goals outlined in their work plan and will use their PA funding effectively and efficiently.

**Date: May 3, 2017**

**Grant Manager: Mary Ottman**